IN THE SPECIFICATION

Page 1, following the title, please insert the following:

-- This application is a 371 of PCT/JP03/13319 filed October 17, 2003 which is hereby incorporated by reference in its entirety. --

Page 13, lines 21-32 should read:

The reaction of the compound of formula (1) or a salt thereof with the magnesium salt is preferably carried out in the presence of a base. Bases usable herein include, for example, tertiary aliphatic amines such as trimethylamine, triethylamine, N,N-diisopropylethylamine, tributylamine, trioctylamine, triallylamine, dimethylbenzylamine, tetramethyl-1,3-diaminopropane, N-methylmorpholine, N-methylpyrrolidine, N-methylpiperidine, 1,8-diazabicyclo[5,4,0]undec-7-ene (DBU), and 1,5-diazabicyclo[4,3,0]non-5-ene (DBN); and nitrogen-containing heterocyclic compounds such as pyridine, 4-dimethylaminopyridine, ~~N,N-dimethylaniline,~~ picoline, collidine, lutidine, quinoline, and isoquinoline.

Page 14, lines 15-24 should read:

A compound of formula (III) with an ester group -COOR introduced therein can be produced by preparing pivaloyloxymethyl malonate as compound 2 according to the procedure in the working example which will be described later and reacting pivaloyloxymethyl malonate with a compound of formula (II) in scheme 1 as

described in Reference Example 1 or 2 which will be described later (step (ii) in scheme 1). Next, a prodrug compound of formula (A) containing -COOR can be synthesized from the compound of formula (III) according to the procedure in scheme 1 ~~(step (ii) in scheme 1)~~.

Page 24, lines 10-12 should read:

Production of ~~(3S,4S)~~ (3S,4R)-3-[(R)-1-(t-butyldimethylsilyloxy) ethyl]-4-[(R)-1-methyl-3-pivaloyloxymethyloxycarbonyl-2-oxo propyl]azetidin-2-one

Page 24-25, lines 32-36 should read:

This suspension was added to the solution containing ~~(3S,4S)~~ (3S,4R)-3-[(R)-1-(t-butyldimethylsilyloxy)ethyl]-4-[(R)-2-imidazol-1-yl-1-methyl-2-oxoethyl]azetidin-2-one prepared above at room temperature, and the mixture was stirred for 3 hr. The reaction mixture was poured into a mixed liquid composed of ethyl acetate (240 mL) and 0.5 M hydrochloric acid (40 mL), and the mixture was stirred, followed by separation. The organic phase was washed with water, an aqueous saturated sodium bicarbonate solution, and saturated brine in that order and was then dried over anhydrous magnesium sulfate, and the solvent was removed by distillation under the reduced pressure. The residue was purified by column chromatography on silica gel (hexane-ethyl acetate = 3 : 2 v/v) to give the title compound as a slightly yellow oil (3.64 g, yield 80%).

Page 26, line 7, please insert --This application claims priority to Japanese Application No. 2002-304630 filed October 18, 2002, and Japanese Application No. 2003-50293 filed February 27, 2003, the entirety of which is hereby incorporated by reference. –